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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7275  
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 1433  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000098

SIPDIS

FOR OES (SENSENEY/LAWRENCE/NELSON/KASTENBERG)  
ALSO FOR S/P (BEHRMAN), S/SRMC (CHANDLER), R (NOOR-ALI),  
S/SECC, NEA/MAG, AND NEA/RA  
PLEASE PASS EPA FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR  
AMMAN FOR ESTH HUB (BHALLA)  
NSC STAFF FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR RAMAMURTHY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2020  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PREL](#) [KGHG](#) [TS](#)  
SUBJECT: TUNISIA: MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT OPEN TO  
INCREASED COOPERATION

REF: A. TUNIS 93 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)B. TUNIS 74 (NOTAL)

Classified by Ambassador Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) In a January 29 courtesy call, the Ambassador and Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Nadhir Hamada discussed science and technology (S&T) cooperation, the United Nations Climate Change Conference and the Copenhagen Accord, as well as the upcoming visit of Science Envoy Dr. Elias Zerhouni. Minister Hamada said that Tunisia would need to coordinate its response to the Copenhagen Accord with other countries in the region and with the G-77. He also expressed his wish to invite Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) Administrator Jackson to Tunisia. End summary.

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An Array of Activities and Initiatives  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Hamada opened the meeting with a description of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development's wide range of activities and responsibilities. In addition to developing policies and regulations on environmental protection and natural resource conservation, the ministry's dossiers include wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal and sanitation, industrial waste management, parks and recreation, and coastal management. The ministry also oversees the Tunis International Center for Environmental Technologies and the National Gene Bank.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Hamada touted his ministry's proactive approach, particularly in providing services to poor and remote areas of Tunisia. By devoting 1.2 percent of GDP to the environment, he said, the Government of Tunisia (GOT) has reached 90 percent of the population with environmental services. It has built new landfills and increased capacity from 4 square meters per inhabitant in 1990 to nearly 17 square meters today. Hamada said the ministry had devoted 50 million dollars to expand sewage systems, particularly in poor areas, and it maintains 34 public parks throughout the country.

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Room for Cooperation  
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¶4. (SBU) Emphasizing the President's June 4, 2009 Cairo speech, the Ambassador told Hamada that science and technology cooperation was a top priority for the United States in Tunisia and other Muslim-majority countries. He previewed the upcoming visit of Science Envoy Dr. Elias Zerhouni, and said he looked forward to working with the minister to make the visit a success.

¶5. (SBU) Hamada was receptive to the Ambassador's suggestion and said his ministry was planning to invite EPA Administrator Jackson for a working visit to Tunisia. (Note: The Embassy has followed up by providing Administrator Jackson's name and contact information, and by offering to transmit the letter to Washington. We have also asked for further details on the proposed visit. End note.)

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No Progress on Copenhagen Accord  
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¶6. (C) As reported in reftels, Hamada told the Ambassador that the GOT was coordinating its response to the Copenhagen Accord with other countries in the region and with the G-77, and that it would not respond before the January 31 deadline. (Note: An official press article dated February 5 quoted an Environment Ministry spokesperson as saying that Tunisia had "initiated the accession procedure to the Copenhagen Accord" and was also preparing information on its action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. End note.)

¶7. (SBU) We will provide biographic information on the minister to INR/B via email.  
GRAY